



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Farm Service Agency

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Fact Sheet

Farmable Wetlands Program

Montana State Producer Handbook



Background

The Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) is a voluntary program to restore up to 100,000 acres in Montana of farmable wetlands and associated buffers by improving the land's hydrology and vegetation. Eligible producers can enroll eligible land in the FWP through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - Continuous Signup.

Benefits

Restoring wetlands will reduce downstream flood damage, improve surface and groundwater quality, and recharge groundwater supplies. Wetlands provide vital habitat for migratory birds and many wildlife species, including threatened and endangered species, and provide recreational opportunities such as bird watching and hunting.

- FWP is limited to no more than 1,000,000 acres and no more than 100,000 acres in any one state (part of overall CRP acreage cap).

Signup

Signup begins annually on October 1 and runs through September 30 of the following year. Offers will be accepted on a continuous signup basis and are automatically accepted provided the acreage and producer meet certain eligibility requirements.

Eligible Land

Wetlands

Eligible acreage includes farmed and prior converted wetlands that have been impacted by farming activities. The maximum acreage for enrollment of wetlands and buffers is 40 acres per tract. A producer may enroll multiple wetlands and associated buffers on a tract as long as the total acreage does not exceed 40 acres.

Acreage must meet the following FWP eligibility requirements:

- Land must be cropland planted to an agricultural commodity 3 of the 10 most recent crop years and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agricultural commodity.
- A wetland must be 10 acres or less (only the first 5 acres may receive payment.)
- A buffer may not exceed 3 times the size of the wetland or an average of 150 feet surrounding the wetland.
- Participants must agree to restore the hydrology of the wetland to the maximum extent possible as determined technically feasible by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- Vegetative cover must be established and the restoration can not impede upstream drainage.
- Wetlands (W), Farmed Wetlands (FW), and Prior

Converted (PC) as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), will be eligible except for any wetland in the floodplain adjacent to a perennial stream or a perennial riverine system.

Contract Duration and Effective Date

FWP contracts are from 10 to 15 years in exchange for annual rental payments, incentive payments, and cost-share for installing necessary practices. The effective date of the contract is the first day of the month following the month of approval.

Payments

Eligible producers may receive the following types of payments:

1. Annual rental payments for a 10- to 15-year period. The annual rental rate is based on the weighted average dryland cash rent.
2. Incentive amount equal to 20 percent of the weighted average dryland cash rent.
3. Up to 50 percent cost-share for establishing permanent cover.
4. Upfront CRP signing incentive payment (SIP) of \$100 to \$150 per acre depending on contract length (made after the contract is approved and all payment eligibility criteria is met).
5. One-time practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40 percent of the eligible costs of

installing the practice (made after the practice is installed, eligible costs are verified, and other payment eligibility criteria are met). Partial PIP payments are not allowed.

Cooperating Agencies

The FWP is administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) with assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; state agencies; and local soil and water conservation districts.

For More Information

Additional information may be obtained at local FSA offices or through the Montana FSA Web site at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt

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